

Influenza Vaccination Best Practices of Michigan's Top Local Health Departments

For the 2012-13 influenza season, Michigan ranked 42nd in the U.S. for flu vaccination coverage of all persons aged 6 months and older (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/fluview/1213season.htm>). In an effort to increase our state's flu vaccination rates, MDCH asked the top performing local health departments (LHDs) for 2012-13 flu vaccination coverage (Table 1) about the activities to which they attribute their success. Immunization activities are categorized below, and some include specific examples from LHDs.

Table 1. Local health department jurisdictions with the 5 highest coverage levels by age group.

All Persons Aged 6 Months & Older	Children 6 Months – 18 Years	Adults 19 Years & Older
1. Kent (31.9%)	1. Kent (43.9%)	1. Kent (27.6%)
2. Ottawa (30.8%)	1. Washtenaw (43.9%)	2. Ottawa (27.4)
3. Washtenaw (29.8%)	3. Kalamazoo (42.8%)	3. Washtenaw (25.9%)
4. Calhoun (25.9%)	4. Grand Traverse (41.4%)	4. District Health Department #10 (24.0%)
5. Muskegon (25.7%)	5. Marquette (40.6%)	5. Muskegon (23.2%)

2012-13 Influenza vaccination coverage (1+ doses) according to Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) data.

LHD Flu Vaccinations

- Offer clients flu vaccine at every visit, and document client refusal.
 - *Ottawa uses the "Refusal to Consent for Vaccination" form when a client or parent declines flu vaccination. This can help clients realize that flu vaccine is just as important as any other recommended immunization.*
- Schedule a child's second dose before the client leaves your LHD.
- Implement 24-hour online scheduling of flu vaccine appointments.
 - *Kent has a flu website that they update and promote in the community. Their website offers 24-hour online scheduling for flu-only appointments at any of their LHD clinics. This is a strategy that makes vaccination more convenient for the client.*
- Provide flu-only vaccine appointments and extra staff for these, if feasible, and offer extended vaccine clinic hours including evenings and weekend.
 - *Kalamazoo providers offer flu clinics during the fall with evening and weekend hours.*
 - *Washtenaw's LHD offers flu-only appointments and adds extra staff for these during clinic hours.*
- Hold flu clinics throughout the community.
 - *DHD #10 holds many community flu clinics and goes to senior centers, adult foster care homes, schools, businesses, and more.*
- Continue vaccinating against flu through June 30 or until the vaccine expires.
- Bill private insurances for flu vaccine and other immunizations.

Immunization Registry

- Use MCIR to assess every client at every visit for flu vaccine.
- Ensure private providers in your jurisdiction are using MCIR and entering flu vaccines. All immunizing providers, including LHDs, are encouraged to enter adult flu doses into MCIR.
- Ensure community vaccinators, such as Visiting Nurses Associations, enter flu vaccines into MCIR.
- Implement immunization tools in MCIR, such as the high-risk flag, reminders and recalls – especially for children who need a second dose.
 - *Ottawa runs second dose flu recalls every year, often multiple times in one season. The LHD also gives information at quarterly private provider meetings on running flu recalls.*

Education and Outreach

- Educate providers through multiple methods including newsletters, websites, and social media.

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- Reach out to the local media and press to promote flu vaccinations, especially at notable moments throughout the flu season (e.g. first lab-confirmed flu cases, increasing statewide flu activity, before holidays, etc.).
- Present flu education and immunization best practices at provider and partner meetings, including Immunization Nurse Education and Physician Peer Education Project on Immunization flu modules.

Target Specific Populations

- School-based flu vaccination clinics.
 - *Marquette holds flu vaccination clinics at 12 area schools for children with written permission slips from their parents. Parents need not be present at clinics to help make access easier.*
 - *Of children in Michigan, those aged 13-18 years have the lowest flu vaccine coverage. Consider targeting high schools for holding immunization clinics.*
- Refugee program gives flu vaccine to all entering refugees through June 30.
 - *Calhoun's refugee program gives flu vaccines to all refugees coming into the county during their health assessments through June 30 when the vaccine expires.*
- Identify persons at high risk for influenza complications (utilize the high-risk flag in MCIR to identify children who need immediate flu vaccination).
 - *Muskegon Mercy Providers' patient registry allows providers to flag an alert for clients with specific high-risk conditions for flu and pneumococcal disease.*

Partner with Other LHD Programs, External Organizations

- Work with LHD administration to ensure flu vaccination is a top priority of LHD's activities.
- Incorporate immunization education through other LHD programs, including WIC, and offer flu vaccine to clients who come to LHD for other reasons.
 - *DHD #10 has an internal referral system among their LHD divisions which increases their services. If someone comes in for family planning, women's health services, or other services, their staff works with the Public Health Nurse if the client has not received flu vaccine.*
- Work with your Vaccines For Children (VFC) providers – assure all are prebooking flu vaccine in MCIR and at adequate amounts for their patient populations, provide immunization education and flu updates throughout the season, and encourage vaccinating against flu until the vaccine expires.
 - *Kent has more than 90 VFC providers that administer flu vaccine. The LHD gives VFC providers regular updates and encourages them to continue vaccinating throughout the flu season.*
- Help enroll local pharmacies in MCIR so they can input vaccination data, including adult data.
- Reach out to local hospitals. Mandatory healthcare worker flu vaccination policies coupled with mandatory immunization entry into MCIR will likely raise flu coverage rates, especially among the adult population.
 - *Washtenaw has two large health systems that employ many people. These health systems require flu vaccination for their employees, which may trickle down to their families as well. Both health systems transfer data into MCIR. A third large health system transfers all data into MCIR including adult data.*

MDCH encourages LHDs to incorporate these best practices into their flu vaccination efforts for the upcoming flu season. Begin conversations with your LHD administration to get their needed support in helping implement new activities in the future that may raise flu vaccination coverage in your county or district. If you have any questions about activities listed in this document and would like to contact your fellow LHDs to find out more details, please contact Stefanie DeVita, Influenza Epidemiologist, at DeVitaS1@michigan.gov or (517)335-3385 to be connected to the appropriate LHD.